

Gender Inequality and Electoral Violence

A quantitative study on the effect of gender inequality on electoral violence

Elsa Nilsson

Bachelor's Thesis

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

Uppsala University

March 2025

Supervisor: Gudlaug Olafsdottir

Wordcount: 9,987

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1. Introduction

While elections in theory provide a peaceful system for settling conflict over rival claims, they are in reality often marred by violence. Electoral violence constitutes a pronounced threat to democratic processes globally, and risks both undermining the electoral process and destabilizing political systems. Furthermore, electoral violence also risks escalating into civil war (Birch et al., 2020, Höglund, 2009). Contemporary research has examined different factors which contribute to electoral violence, including ethnic tensions, socioeconomic conditions and institutional weakness. Furthermore, previous research has found robust results for lower levels of gender inequality to have a mitigating effect on both intrastate and interstate violence (Melander, 2005a: Caprioli, 2000: Caprioli, 2005) . However, the role of gender inequality in relation to specifically electoral violence remains surprisingly unexplored in existing research. This paper aims to address this research gap by examining the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence. At the core of this research is the research question: “How does the level of gender inequality affect the probability of electoral violence?”

The theoretical framework for this paper will be based on the constructivist notion that societies characterized by high levels of gender inequality are entrenched by patriarchal gender norms which prescribe different roles to men and women (Dahl, 2016: 15-18: Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 278). While women are prescribed a passive, nurturing role, the traditional view of masculinity puts men in a role where they should possess toughness, aggression, and the use of force to assert honor and power. These norms are called “militarized masculinities” and glorify the use of violence as a means to gain and maintain power (Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 282: Wegner, 2021: Lee et al., 2019). Additionally, societies where such norms are prevalent exhibit hierarchical social structures that normalize domination of one group over another, creating patterns of “othering” that extend beyond gender relations to broader social dynamics (Ibid). Based on this, this paper hypothesizes that the gender unequal norms and societal structures creates a tolerance of violence that increases the risk of electoral violence.

Methodologically, this study will be employed quantitatively through a logistic regression. The analysis will include both a bivariate regression and a multivariate regression controlling for potentially confounding factors. As it is a quantitative study, it does not aim to establish a

causal mechanism but instead investigate the correlational relationship between electoral violence and gender inequality. Through this, this paper aims to contribute to contemporary research by expanding our understanding of electoral violence and the societal structures which enables it.

2. Theoretical framework and Previous Literature

2.1 Conceptualizing Gender Inequality

The independent variable, and hence the factor that is argued to explain the variation of electoral violence, is Gender inequality. Gender inequality is a broad concept, with several possible implications. This subsection will disentangle the concept to establish a theoretical foundation before proceeding with examining previous research.

Both gender and sex are used to describe differences between groups and societal structures, but while sex refers to biological differences related to human reproduction, gender is a more fluid term. This paper will build its conceptualization of gender on the constructivist notion of gender as a dynamic social construct (Dahl, 2016:15-18; Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 278). That is, rather than being static, gender is shaped by societal structures and cultural and historical contexts, and evolves in response to changes within these frameworks (Dahl, 2016: 15-18). The social construct of gender implies that different expectations, roles, and characteristics are assigned to men and women based on their biological sex (Ibid). These expectations and characteristics constitute gender norms. In general, norms can be defined as rules guiding behavior and representing what is considered as appropriate or accepted. In this way, they shape not only individual behavior but also larger societal structures (Ibid). Gender norms prescribe men and women with different characteristics and societal roles which shapes a hierarchical order that subordinates women and while privileging men. These norms align with traditional perceptions of femininity and masculinity, where men should show strength and dominance, while women should embody submissiveness, nurturing, and empathy (Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 282).

Additionally, gender should be interpreted as a relational concept, meaning that the experiences, behaviors, and societal expectations of one gender are inherently tied to and

influenced by others (Dahl, 2016: 15). This understanding is crucial for analyzing power structures and hierarchical order intertwined with gender norms.

Building on this, this paper will define gender inequality as follows: Gender inequality is the unequal distribution of rights, opportunities, and resources based on gender. It is shaped by gender norms that attribute different expectations and roles to individuals based on traditional ideas of femininity and masculinity. These norms establish and maintain a hierarchical order between men and women, privileging men while subordinating women. Gender inequality is followingly manifested in disparities across various domains, including access to education, income, employment, legal rights, and decision-making power.

2.2. Gender Inequality and Violent Conflict

The connection between gender inequality and violent conflict has received increased attention over the last few years. A significant portion of research has found strong support for lower levels of gender inequality to have a mitigating effect on armed conflict. Several studies have examined this relationship quantitatively for both intrastate and interstate conflict, as well as human rights abuses perpetrated by the state (Melander, 2005a, 2005b: Bjarnegård, Melander, 2011: Caprioli, 2000: Caprioli, 2005: Schaftenaar, 2017).

Caprioli (2000) paved the way for research in this field when she found statistically significant results for gender inequality's mitigating effect on international conflict when measured across three dimensions: political, economic, and social equality. Building on these findings, studies on gender inequality's effect on intrastate violence emerged. Melander (2005) found statistically significant results showing states with higher levels of gender equality, measured by the percentage of women in parliament and the ratio of female-to-male higher education attainment, were less likely to experience intrastate armed conflict. Caprioli (2005) arrived at the same conclusion when measuring gender inequality in terms of fertility rate and percentage of women in the labor force.

More recently, a study examined how the level of gender inequality affects conflict onset and found statistically significant results showing societies with higher levels of gender inequality were more likely to experience nonviolent campaign onset compared to inaction or armed

conflict onset (Schaftenaar, 2017). This study measured gender equality through similar operationalizations, including fertility rate and female-to-male education attainment ratio (Ibid).

Thus, studies examining gender inequality in relation to armed conflict consistently arrive at the same conclusion: gender equality has a negative effect on armed conflict. Yet different scholars suggest different mechanisms driving this process. Largely, there are two dominant strands of research and these will be outlined below.

2.2.1 The Essentialist Argument

According to the essentialist argument, men and women are predisposed with distinct attributes and behaviors from inherent physiological and psychological differences (Brooks, Valentino, 2011:271; Sahin, Soylu Yalcinkaya, 2020: 523; Melander, 2005a, 2005b). These theorists tie female aversion to violence closely with women's biological role as mothers and caregivers, which is argued to foster nurturing, cooperative, and peaceful behaviors and attitudes. Girls are from an early age taught to prioritize relationships and communication, fostering openness to communication and compromise while simultaneously increasing aversion to violence. In contrast, men are portrayed as having a more violent nature for handling conflict (Ibid).

These innate, or at least very early acquired attributes, are further argued to have implications for a society's susceptibility to violent conflict (Melander, 2005a, 2005b). As women are marginalized from powerful positions in society, such as political or military institutions, decision-making will proceed according to a more masculine logic, favoring conflict and domination over dialogue and empathy. Thus, it is argued that societies with lower levels of gender inequality will be less likely to experience armed conflict due to increased inclusion of women in decision-making (Ibid). Hence, the mechanism argued to drive this process is the actual number of women having access to power.

This strand of research has been criticized on multiple grounds. Partly, the criticism has accused the argument of being overly simplistic and deterministic, mainly because it neglects the significant influence of social, cultural, and institutional factors which also shape individual behavior (Melander, 2005a). Second, some claim that the theory risks reinforcing

traditional gender stereotypes by portraying women as passive and men as aggressive and dominant by nature. Additionally, limited empirical evidence has been found when the theory has been tested (Sahir, Soylu Yalcinkaya, 2020: 524).

2.2.2 The Constructivist Argument and Militarized Masculinity

The second strand of research takes a more constructivist approach to understanding the relationship between gender inequality and violent conflict. The constructivist argument suggests that societal norms and attitudes regarding the identities of men and women affect the likelihood of violent conflict (Melander, 2005; Bjarnegård, Brouneus, Melander, 2017; Schaftenaar, 2017). At the core of this constructivist reasoning is the idea that socially constructed gender norms serve as the bearing mechanism connecting gender inequality to attitudes toward and the use of violence (Ibid). Thus, behavioral differences between men and women are not interpreted as stemming from variation in biological inheritance, but instead from culturally established norms that assign groups and individuals specific traits and roles based on their gender. Consequently, these norms are responsive to change within the same cultural frameworks.

In particular, this view emphasizes how traditional ideas of masculinity normalize aggression, violence, and domination as essential traits of male identity (Melander, Bjarnegård, 2011; Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 278). This is referred to as “militarized masculinity” and creates an idealized image of manhood centered on physical strength, emotional control, and preparedness to use violence to gain dominance and defend one’s honor (Wegner, 2021; Lee et al., 2019).

These norms entail a strong hierarchical social structure with men as dominant and women as subordinate, creating a social structure where domination by one group over another is normalized (Melander, Bjarnegård, 2011; Brooks, Valentino, 2011). This is argued to foster “othering” between men and women but also other societal groups. The concept of othering involves creating a sharp distinction between oneself, or one’s group, and others, often devaluing the other group. Through this, unequal gender roles and hierarchical structures are normalized and extended to broader societal and political domains where they are applied to relationships between other social groups, such as ethnic or political divisions (Ibid).

In this way, patriarchal values and norms of militarized masculinities are argued to justify domination of other groups and legitimize violence as a means for achieving it. Thus, in societies where militarized masculinity permeates the societal structures, the importance of maintaining power and protecting the honor of oneself and one's group becomes more salient, and the domination of other groups is seen as justified. Additionally, violence becomes more accepted as a tool to assert power and control (Wegner, 2021; Lee et al., 2019; Bjarnegård, Melander, 2011).

Scholars have found strong empirical support for this constructivist argument by examining how attitudes towards gender equality affect the tolerance of violence and use of force for both men and women. Melander and Bjarnegård (2017) found that the gender gap in attitudes towards violence and use of force, where women hold more pacifistic preferences than men, becomes insignificant if feminist attitudes are accounted for. This suggests that it is the attitudes and norms about gender that matter rather than inherent biological differences between men and women. Consequently, when gender inequality decreases, the norms that militarize male identity start to change, as do attitudes toward violence, which leads to reduced levels of violence in society (Melander, 2005; Schaftenaar, 2017; Bjarnegård, Brouneus, Melander, 2017).

2.3 Conceptualizing Electoral Violence

The dependent variable, and hence the primary subject for investigation in this paper, is electoral violence. It is a concept which requires careful definition to distinguish it from other forms of political violence. This section will outline the characteristics of electoral violence and ultimately provide a conceptual definition.

The phenomenon can be described as a violent form of political manipulation. It is a subtype of political violence, defined by its direct connection to the electoral process, both in terms of timing and substance (Höglund, 2009; Birch et al., 2020; Bekoe, et al., 2020).

The temporal connection simply implies that the violence occurs during the electoral process and can be divided into three subtypes, depending on whether it occurs before, during, or after polling day (Birch et al., 2020; Bekoe, et al., 2020: 258). There is no clear rule or consensus for when the electoral process begins or ends; thus, different sources may set

different temporal boundaries. However, these timeframes usually vary from one year to three months before and after the date of the election (Birch et al., 2020). The violence can also look different and have different motives depending on during which part of the electoral process it is perpetrated (Ibid). This paper will incorporate electoral violence during the entire electoral process.

The substantial connection means that the election can be identified as one of the motives behind the violence, and is a crucial part of defining electoral violence. At its core, electoral violence is motivated by the intention of manipulating electoral outcomes. While the primary goal is to undermine political competition and attain power, it often also serves broader political purposes, such as undermining public confidence in political institutions or disrupting or maintaining existing power structures (Höglund, 2009; Birch et al., 2020; Bekoe, et al., 2020).

Unlike other forms of political manipulation, such as fraud or vote buying, electoral violence adds a dimension of fear of physical harm or even death. Through this, it can be used as a powerful tool for shaping political outcomes (Höglund, 2009; Birch et al., 2020; Bekoe, et al., 2020). Some conceptualizations of electoral violence also incorporate non-physical violence, such as threats, scare tactics, and intimidation (Birch et al., 2020). While it is acknowledged that non-physical violence can have considerable effects by shaping behaviors and perceptions, this paper will limit its focus to physical forms of electoral violence.

For this study, electoral violence is defined as: the use of physical violence to manipulate electoral processes by producing fear of physical injury or loss of actual life. It is perpetrated by, and targets, different kinds of actors including civilians and organized groups, state-actors and non-state actors. It is a subcategory of political violence, distinguished by a substantive and temporal connection to an electoral process. Further, it is perpetrated in different ways depending on actor, context, and timing, and has a coercive component at its core.

2.4 Previous Research on Electoral Violence

Up until 2009 when Höglund (2009) articulated the necessity of studying electoral violence as a distinct type of violence, the phenomenon was studied as part of the broader term political violence. This makes electoral violence a rather novel area of research. However, it

is a field that has received increased attention in recent years, and scholars have found support for several different actors to be drivers of electoral violence (Höglund, 2009; Birch et al., 2020; Bekoe et al., 2020; Fjelde, Höglund, 2016).

Scholars have investigated the causes of electoral violence from various perspectives, including rational choice theory, grievance- and institutionalist-based explanations. Rational choice theories suggest that political actors play a part in electoral violence as a strategy to influence the electoral end when the use of violence is perceived as more effective than other methods such as fraud or voter manipulation (Wilkinson, 2004). This explanation is closely connected to the institutionalist explanation, as electoral violence becomes a more attractive strategy when institutions are weak due to less fear of repercussions (Fjelde, Höglund, 2016). Further, it is also acknowledged that electoral violence is more likely when political competition is high (Wilkinson, 2004).

Grievance-based perspectives focus instead on structural inequalities, often centered around ethnic divisions, as drivers of electoral violence. In countries with large ethnic divisions, the electoral process can increase tensions between these groups since political actors often mobilize voters along ethnic lines (Daxecker, Rauschenbach, 2023). This is closely connected to the theory of ethnic outbidding, which argues that political manipulation of ethnic tensions aims to increase ethnic polarization to spur political mobilization (Horowitz, 1985; Rabushka, Shepsle, 1972). Through this, heightened tension between competing ethnic groups can increase the salience of ethnic identity which in turn is supposed to increase political mobilization along ethnic lines (Ibid).

2.5 Research Gap

Surprisingly, considering the extensive body of research on gender inequality in relation to other forms of violence and armed conflict, studies specifically focused on the impact of gender inequality on electoral violence remains limited. To my knowledge, only three studies have directly investigated this relationship. Two of these studies employed quantitative methods, both finding support for higher levels of gender inequality to be correlated with higher levels of electoral violence (Ouedraogo, Ouedraogo, 2019; Norman, 2018).

Tiedermann (2024) contributed to the field by examining the relationship through a

qualitative study, offering deeper insight into the causal mechanism of this relationship. Consistent with prior research, Tiedermann found higher levels of gender inequality to be associated with higher levels of electoral violence (Tiedermann, 2024).

However, all of the above-mentioned studies focus their research on Sub-Saharan Africa, leaving a significant gap in the understanding of whether the observed relationship holds in other parts of the world with varying political, cultural, and economic contexts (Ouedraogo, Ouedraogo, 2019; Norman, 2018; Tiedermann, 2024). This gap also applies to the broader research on electoral violence, as a majority of the research has solely focused on Sub-Saharan Africa.

This paper seeks to address this gap by extending the scope of inquiry beyond Sub-Saharan Africa to adopt a global scope. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the field by providing a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequality and electoral violence, offering insights that are generalizable across diverse political and cultural settings.

2.6 Theoretical Argument

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence. This will be done at a macro-level, using a quantitative method. This entails that the focus is to examine a correlational rather than a causal relationship, as questions of how and why a relationship exists requires more detailed micro-level measurements. Thus, arguing for a specific causal mechanism to connect the independent and dependent variable is not in focus for this paper. However, it is still relevant to present a plausible causal mechanism both to anchor the results to previous research as well as for the understanding of alternative explanations and choice of control variables. Therefore, a causal mechanism will be further elaborated below.

Before delving into the causal mechanism of this paper, it is important to discuss the relationship between gender inequality and gender norms. As already discussed under section 2.1, there is a distinction between gender inequality as structural disparities between men and women, the independent variable of this paper, and gender norms, the core mechanism of the proposed theory (Dahl, 2016:15-18; Schrock, Schwalbe, 2009: 278) . As gender inequality and gender norms are mutually reinforcing, it is hard to determine which one leads to the

other. From one perspective, the independent variable could be a consequence of the mechanism, as gender norms undoubtedly lead to structural disparities. However, established structural disparities also play a crucial role in maintaining and reinforcing unequal gender norms. This manifests a cyclical relationship which underscores the complexity of disentangling norms from disparities, as each sustains and reinforces the other. That is, while gender norms are considered to be the core mechanism of the proposed theory, gender inequality provides an observable measure of these norms and provides a justifiable basis for analysis.

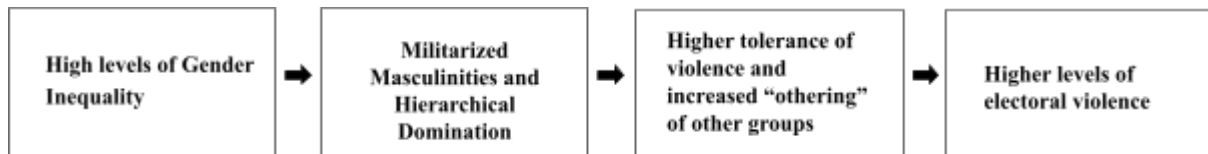
2.6.1 Causal Mechanism

In societies with high gender inequality, patriarchal norms and values are entrenched and widely accepted. These norms prescribe men and women with different roles and characteristics, where women are given a subordinate nursing role and the role of men is closely tied to male honor (Bjarnegård, Brouneus, Melander, 2017). This centrality of male honor in gender unequal societies is captured by the concept of militarized masculinity. The concept emphasizes toughness, aggression, and the readiness to use force to prove one's honor. This also entails a threat of losing respect if one ought to fail to protect one's honor, as passivity or even compromise can be perceived as emasculating or dishonorable. Thus, militarized masculinity glorifies violence as a culturally sanctioned tool to assert honor and power (Melander, 2005; Schaftenaar, 2017; Bjarnegård, Brouneus, Melander, 2017). This also entails that in societies where norms of militarized masculinity are strong, violence will be seen as an acceptable tool of achieving or maintaining domination. Further, these norms entail a strong hierarchical social structure where men are dominant and women are subordinate, creating a social structure where domination by one group over another is normalized. This fosters a culture of “othering” that is extended also to relationships between other social groups, reinforcing broader patterns of inequality and group-based discrimination (Melander, Bjarnegård, 2011; Brooks, Valentino, 2011).

This is argued to be especially triggered during electoral processes, since elections constitute a situation where tensions and rivalries between groups become particularly pronounced (Birch et al., 2020). Thus, in societies where gender norms normalizes group discrimination and militarized masculinities glorifies use of violence, the occurrence of electoral violence is likely to increase.

In summary, this paper argues that unequal gender norms, reflected in structural disparities between the sexes, foster societies where militarized masculinity and hierarchical structures contribute to higher levels of electoral violence. These dynamics are argued to heighten the risk of electoral violence.

2.6.2 Illustration of Causal Mechanism



2.6.3 Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical argument proposed above, the hypothesis of this study is the following:

H1: High levels of gender inequality is positively correlated with a high probability of electoral violence

3. Research Design

3.1 Methodology

The purpose of this study is to test the effects of gender inequality on electoral violence. The aim is to explore the correlation between these variables and it will be done through a quantitative method. This choice of method is based on the relatively unexplored nature of the topic, examining gender inequality in relation to violence specifically connected to the electoral process. This makes a quantitative method a good fit since it allows for the identification of patterns and relationships between variables, providing measurable and objective insights that can form the basis for further theoretical and empirical research (Brancati, 2018: 215). The examination will be conducted through a logistic regression, due to the binary nature of the dependent variable (Kellstedt, Whitten, 2018: 277). First, a bivariate logistic regression will be executed to examine the effect of gender inequality on the occurrence of electoral violence. This will be followed by a multivariate regression to control for other factors that may influence the relationship. The multivariate regression includes, in addition to the dependent and independent variable, three variables controlling, respectively, for existence of intrastate conflict, ethnic fractionalization, and level of democracy. These will be discussed in greater detail in a separate section.

The expected relationship is that higher levels of gender inequality will be correlated with higher levels of electoral violence. The datasets used to test this relationship are the Quality of Government Jan24 dataset (henceforth referred to as QoG) and the National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy 6.0 dataset (henceforth referred to as NELDA) (Teorell et al., 2024; Hyde, Marinov, 2012). In addition, the UCDP Country-Year Dataset on Organized Violence within Country Borders version 24.1, and the V-dem Varieties of Democracy Dataset v14 will be used for testing variables not included in the NELDA or QoG datasets (Davies et al., 2024; Coppedge et al., 2024).

Moreover, the NELDA dataset was originally on an election-event level, but has been aggregated to a country-year level to match the country-election year as the unit of analysis (Hyde, Marinov, 2012). That is, some countries in the original dataset included more than one election-event in the same year, for instance both presidential and parliamentary elections. In

those cases, the election-events have been aggregated to produce a single value per country and year. The aggregation was performed to simplify analysis and comparison across countries and years. Further, since the NELDA dataset codes its variables as binary (coded as either 0 or 1), the aggregation is based on the maximum value to ensure that any instance of electoral violence is captured for a given country-election year (Ibid). Since the analysis aims to examine the occurrence of electoral violence, an aggregation which favors presence of electoral violence over its absence is deemed appropriate.

Further, the datasets were merged to enable a logistic regression analysis of the relationship, one including only the dependent and independent variable, and one also including three control variables. The merging process was based on the shared identifiers of Country and Year, ensuring that only observations with data for the specific country and year present in all datasets were included in the regression analysis.

The dataset used for the bivariate logistic regression of the dependent and independent variable 1,103 observations from 131 countries ranging from the years 1990 to 2020. However, in the dataset used for the multivariate logistic regression, the number of observations is reduced to 972 from 121 countries due to missing data in the control variables. Although there is a slight decrease of the sample size, the difference in number of observations is relatively small. This reflects the availability of all included variables.

The temporal scope of the dataset ranges from 1990 to 2020, covering 30 years of electoral events. This wide-ranging time frame provides a comprehensive basis for exploring the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence over time. The spatial scope includes countries from all regions of the world, providing a comprehensive basis for examining the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence across diverse societal and political contexts. This global scope enables identification of patterns that can be generalizable across different societies and states. On the other hand, an analysis including such diverse contexts also entails introduction of potential confounding variables which needs to be carefully controlled for.

3.2 Operationalizations

3.2.1 Independent variable

As discussed in the theoretical framework, Gender Inequality is a broad concept that leaves room for subjective interpretation. Therefore, careful operationalization and choice of measurements are critical to ensure validity and reliability of the analysis. In this study, the Gender Inequality Index (henceforth referred to as GII) is used to measure the independent variable (UNDP, 2024).

The use of the GII to operationalize the independent variable is motivated by its standardized, internationally recognized measure and multidimensional nature (UNDP, 2024). Thus, GII is considered a robust and well-fitted measure for the analysis. The GII is developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and accessed through the Quality of Government (QoG) dataset. It is a composite index reflecting gender disparities across three key dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic participation (Teorell et al., 2024). This multidimensional measure is considered to ensure high validity since it allows for a comprehensive measurement of Gender Inequality through analyzing disparities in core dimensions of gender inequality. The reproductive health dimension covers indicators such as maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates, capturing disparities in access to healthcare and protective policies for women (UNDP, 2024). Empowerment is measured through women's representation in national parliaments and their enrollment in higher education, highlighting their participation in decision-making processes and social mobility (Ibid). Economic participation is represented by disparities in labor force participation rates (Ibid). This multidimensional structure allows the GII to capture the complex and interrelated aspects of gender inequality in a standardized manner, making it particularly useful for cross-national comparisons while also ensuring reliability. It is a continuous variable and the metric ranges from 0 to 1, where a low value indicates less inequality between women and men, and a higher value reflects significant gender-based advantage (Ibid). To enhance the interpretation of the logistic results, the variable was rescaled to a range between 0-100, by multiplying all values by 100. This enables a more intuitive interpretation of the odds ratio, as a 1-unit increase in the rescaled variable

corresponds to a 1% increase in gender equality, compared to 100% increase in the original scale.

Despite the many strengths of the GII as a measure of gender inequality in this study, it does have limitations which requires consideration. As discussed in the 2.6 section, GII is a measure of structural disparities of inequality between men and women, while the core mechanism of the proposed theory relies on gender norms. This could potentially lower the validity of the study, as gender norms are not measured directly. Thus, this difference needs to be considered. Yet, as gender inequality and structural disparities are so closely intertwined, measurement of gender inequality as an independent variable is argued to be a good proxy for gender norms, which are more difficult to quantify.

Further, as GII measures macro-level disparities and inequalities on a structural level, it leaves micro-level measurements of gender inequality unaccounted for. Micro-level measures, such as individual attitudes or norms, constitute an important aspect of understanding the full scope of gender inequality as it gives valuable information of how gender roles are experienced at the societal level. Thus it is important to acknowledge the drawback of not including such measures in the analysis. Another limitation of GII is that it focuses on structural indicators, which to some extent could show a level of gender inequality that does not fully reflect societal realities. As an example, a high proportion of parliamentary seats held by women might indicate progress in terms of formal political representation, while women in reality face several gender based disadvantages on a societal level.

However, the Gender Inequality Index is still argued to serve as a useful measure for understanding gender inequality despite these limitations. Structural inequalities are rooted in and highly intertwined with unequal gender norms. As discussed in the theoretical framework, gender norms involving militarized masculinity which disadvantages women in relation to men, produces disparities that are observable on a structural level, and the other way around. Thus, a measure such as the GII can still be argued to constitute a well-fitted proxy for gender inequality.

3.2.2 The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, Electoral Violence, is operationalized using the “Nelda33” variable from the NELDA dataset. The NELDA dataset is a good fit for this study since it encompasses a broad temporal and spatial span, covering elections in all independent countries from 1945-2020 (Hyde, Marinov, 2012). Further, it has a straightforward, binary nature and a clear demarcation, only including lethal violence, which contributes to minimizing conceptual ambiguity which enhances the reliability.

The variable “Nelda33” captures incidents of electoral violence throughout the entire electoral process, that is, during the campaign period, on polling day, as well as in the post-election process. It does so by answering the question “Was there significant violence involving civilian deaths immediately before, during, or after the election?” (Hyde, Marinov, 2012). The threshold for “significant” violence is defined as events resulting in civilian deaths. Further, the variable is binary, coded as “1” (“yes” in the original dataset) if significant electoral violence occurred and “0” (“no” in the original dataset) if it did not (Ibid).

Concerning substantial connection to an election, a key part of the definition of electoral violence, NELDA requires the violence to be “at least plausibly related to the election”. Additionally, it does not include deaths related to civil wars or other types of violence, unless they have a clear connection to the election (Hyde, Marinov, 2012). Yet, the difficulties of fully ensuring this connection is also acknowledged, especially in contexts where overlapping forms of violence complicate the distinction. This could slightly reduce the validity if violence unrelated to the election is included. The same ambiguity could also risk affecting reliability, as difficulty in determining causation could result in inconsistent coding. Yet, distinguishing electoral violence from other forms of violence is, as discussed in the theoretical framework, a widely recognized challenge that does not only apply to NELDA, but is persistent in all data of electoral violence (Birch et al., 2020).

However, this operationalization has limitations which requires acknowledgement. It only accounts for the most severe events of physical violence that result in civilian deaths, thereby excluding a large part of the theoretical conceptualization of electoral violence. Due to this,

the measurement fails to account for other significant forms of electoral violence which could have considerable effects on the electoral process and political stability. Further, the binary nature of the variable could risk oversimplifying the complexity of this kind of violence since it reduces electoral violence to a simple yes/no outcome. This overlooks variation in aspects such as intensity, scale, and duration, limiting the ability to capture nuances of the violence. Thus, while the clear-cut operationalization avoids ambiguity, it may obscure the diverse manifestations and dynamics of electoral violence.

As this study aims to explore the correlation between gender inequality and electoral violence without considering how specific forms of electoral violence could be differently affected, the NELDA dataset is argued to be well-suited. Its coding focuses on broader measures that align with the study's objective. Additionally, other datasets often take on a more detailed approach, for example the V-dem which is structured based on actor-specific measurements, which is not deemed necessary for this study (Coppedge et al., 2024).

3.3 Control Variables

This section will discuss the control variables of this study, which are included to isolate the suggested relationship between electoral violence and gender inequality. The control variables will be included in the multivariate regression and consist of the following: intrastate armed conflict, ethnic fractionalization, and liberal democracy. Below, these will be defined and discussed respectively.

While these control variables have been selected carefully to ensure a robust analysis, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of not including other potentially influential factors. For example, variables such as the design of electoral systems could play influential roles in shaping the conditions for electoral violence. The decision to limit the number of control variables is motivated by practical constraints of this study. Furthermore, the primary focus of this study is to examine the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence. Limiting the number of control variables is also a way to keep the focus on this central objective.

3.3.1 Intrastate conflict

The first factor which needs to be controlled for is intrastate armed conflict. This is motivated by its documented impact on electoral violence, being both significant and multifaceted (Höglund, 2009; Birch et al., 2020). One reason behind the choice of this control variable is that a society experiencing conflict over longer periods of time becomes permeated by insecurity and fear. This risks to alter the attitudes towards violence so that it becomes more and more normalized and accepted. This has implications in broader societal structures and is thus seen to increase the risk for violence during the electoral process (Ibid). Additionally, societies with ongoing violent conflict also entails increased presence of armed actors. This presence lowers the threshold for resorting to violence if any of the parties are opposing the electoral process or outcome (Birch et al., 2020).

Further, the choice of measuring specifically intrastate violence, excluding interstate conflicts, is motivated by the fact that intrastate conflicts usually have a more direct connection to domestic political dynamics and power struggles. Thus, intrastate conflicts are more likely to affect the likelihood of electoral violence than interstate conflicts (Birnie, 2007).

This control variable will be operationalized using the UCDP Country-Year Dataset on Organized Violence within Country Borders version 24.1, which is based on the UCDP Georeferenced Events Dataset (UCDP GED) (Davies et al., 2024). As this is a global dataset covering the whole world during the years of 1989-2023, it suits the spatial and temporal scope of this study. It is a binary variable which codes for the existence of organized violence within country borders (1) or no existence of such violence (0). Thus, it provides a clear framework for controlling for a possible effect of intrastate armed conflict on electoral violence. It is also important to note that UCDP only includes state-based violence, meaning that this variable does not incorporate non-state conflicts (Ibid).

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge an important aspect of the relationship between intrastate conflict and electoral violence. These variables risk to conceptually overlap in some contexts, as violent events in some instances risk being coded as both intrastate violence and electoral violence (Birch, et al., 2020). This overlap could raise concern for possible multicollinearity in the regression model, which could affect the precision of estimating the

relationship between the dependent and independent variable. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the regression results. However, this study employs careful operationalizations to minimize this conceptual overlap. Yet, this conceptual overlap also represents an ongoing challenge for this field of research, and needs to gain further methodological attention in future research (Ibid).

3.3.2 Ethnic Fractionalization

The second control variable included in this study has been assessed from the Quality of Government (QoG) dataset (Teorell et al., 2024), and is produced by James D. Fearon and published by Journal of Economic Growth (Fearon, 2003). The variable is called “Ethnic Fractionalization” and measures the diversity of ethnoreligious groups by country, including groups that constituted at least 1% of the population (Teorell et al., 2024). It is a continuous variable ranging from 0 to 1, and reflects the level of ethnic fragmentation through displaying the likelihood of two randomly selected people in a country to belong to different ethnocultural groups. Low values (closer to 0) indicate a more homogenous population whereas higher values (closer to 1) indicate greater national diversity (Ibid).

The inclusion of this variable is important to isolate the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence, as a large amount of previous research points out ethnic cleavages as a strong predictor of electoral violence (Birbir, 2007; Birch et al., 2020; Wilkinson, 2004).

As discussed in section 2.4, prior research argues that already existing cleavages between ethnic groups risk to be strengthened during the electoral process, much due to the fact that political actors play upon these tensions to create political mobilization (Ibid). In relation to the operationalization of this variable, it should be acknowledged that this operationalization measures ethnic diversity rather than directly measuring ethnic tensions or political mobilization along ethnic lines. Thus, this variable should be seen as a proxy for ethnic cleavages.

3.3.3 Liberal Democracy

The third factor which needs to be controlled for is the level of democracy. The status of democracy and political institutions is broadly considered as a key predictor of electoral violence. Research suggests unconsolidated democracies to run a higher risk of experiencing electoral violence due to several reasons. One key mechanism of this is that societies with weak political institutions and judicial systems often develop cultures of impunity, which can make violence a viable or even attractive way of reaching political goals (Birch et al., 2020: Bekoe, Burchard, 2020: 260).

Due to this, the operationalization of the variable is made using the “Liberal Democracy Index” variable from the V-dem dataset. It measures democracy by accounting for the protection of civil liberties, judicial independence and adherence to the rule of law (Coppedge et al., 2024). The index further includes the level of electoral democracy, which is another V-dem variable measuring the degree to which a state reaches principles of democracy through accounting for different factors contributing to the quality and inclusiveness of the electoral process (Ibid).

The Liberal Democracy Index is a continuous variable ranging from 0-1, where low values indicate low values of democracy and vice versa (Ibid).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

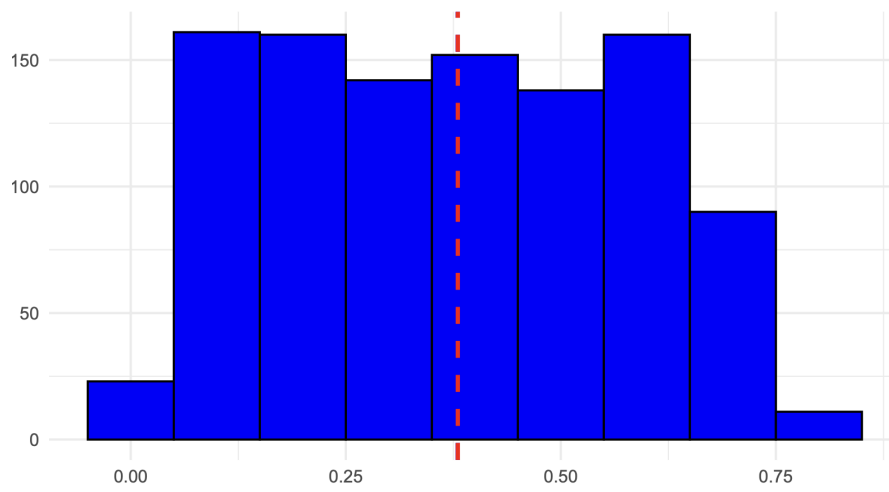
Below is a table representing descriptive statistics for the continuous variables included in the analysis. The table includes the following information: number of observations, mean, standard deviation, median, minimum and maximum values as well as percentiles for the variables. Further, histograms for the three respective variables are included to illustrate the distribution of the data.

Followingly, a table including descriptive statistics for the binary variables give information about the mean, and the absolute frequencies of each outcome (0 or 1). Since the binary variables only can take on two different values, the mean represents the proportion of the observations where the value is 1. This is followed by bar plots to give a visual presentation of the relative frequencies within the dataset. All together, these descriptive statistics can provide important information about the characteristics of the data.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for continuous variables

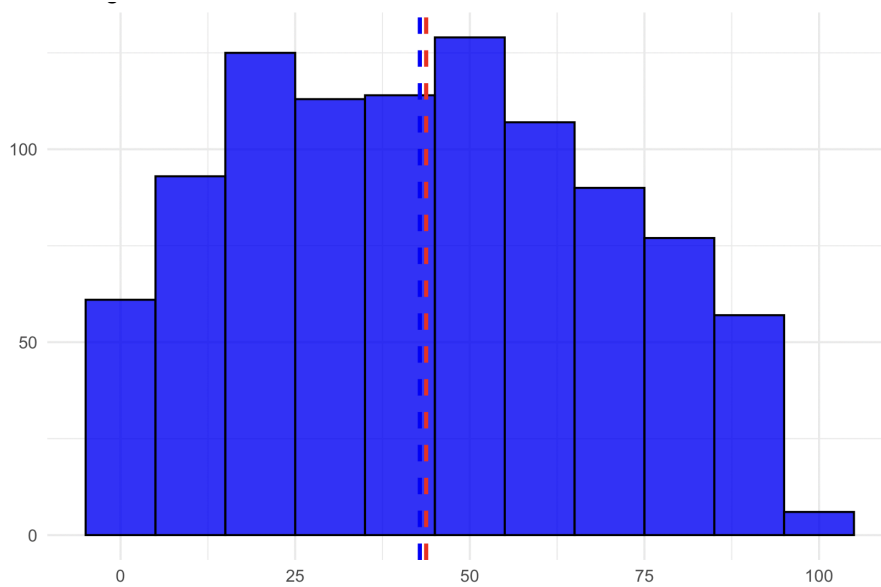
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Gender Inequality	1037	38.01	20.14	2	38	19	56	81
Ethnic Fractionalization	972	43.75	25.26	1.19	42.84	21.34	63.79	100
Liberal Democracy	1037	47.94	26.66	1.4	48.2	23.3	75.8	89.6

Figure 2: Histogram of Gender Inequality in the observed sample



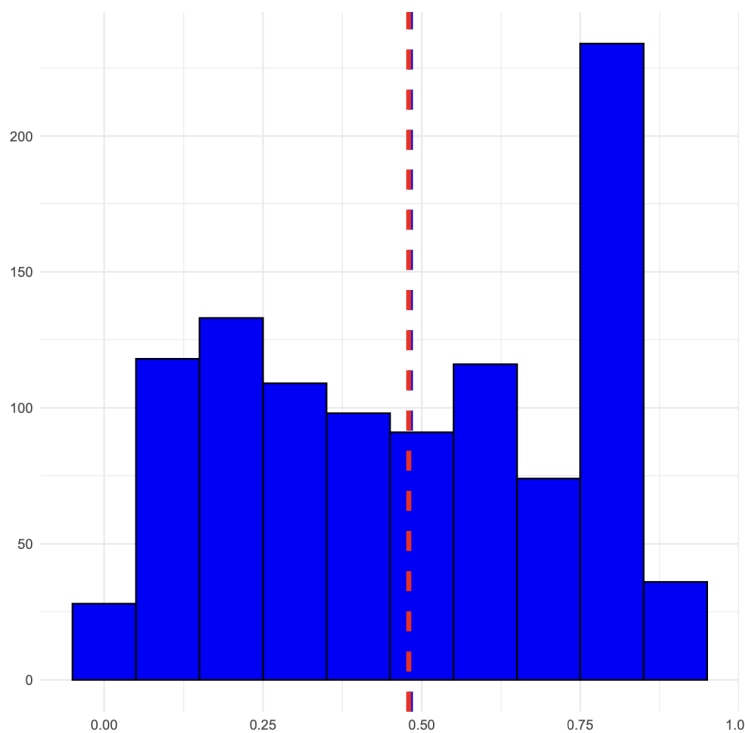
Note: Mean illustrated by red line. Median illustrated by blue line.

Figure 3: Histogram of Ethnic Fractionalization in the observed sample



Note: Mean illustrated by red line. Median illustrated by blue line.

Figure 4: Histogram of Liberal Democracy in the observed sample



Note: Mean illustrated by red line. Median illustrated by blue line.

As for the binary variables, both show an unbalanced proportion of positive and negative values. For the dependent variable, Electoral Violence, about 19% of the observations experienced significant electoral violence, while the remaining 81% of the observations did not. The distribution is very similar to Intrastate Conflict, where 20% of the observations experienced intrastate conflict and 80% did not.

While this unbalance is expected, since events of significant electoral violence and intrastate conflict are generally less common, it can have important implications for the performance of the logistic regression. The unbalanced distribution between positive and negative values of the binary variables are commonly referred to as class imbalance, and occurs when one class, in this case the 0-values (no electoral violence) dominates the dataset and constitutes the majority class (Kellstedt, Whitten, 2018). However, the unbalanced distribution is not extreme, and the high number of observations in the sample ensures that the model has enough data from the minority class to make reliable likelihood estimates. That is, while the uneven distribution of positive and negative values could pose a problem in some contexts, it should not constitute a notable issue for this analysis.

4.2 Regression Results

Table 5: The effects of Gender Inequality on the occurrence of Electoral Violence, including control variables (Regression Results)

	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	
	Electoral Violence	
	M1	M2
Constant	0.021*** (0.012, 0.034)	0.036*** (0.015, 0.080)
Gender Inequality	1.06*** (1.05, 1.07)	1.046*** (1.031, 1.061)
Intrastate Conflict		4.655*** (3.184, 6.837)
Ethnic Fractionalization		0.996 (0.988, 1.00)
Liberal Democracy		0.990* (0.981, 0.999)
Observations:	1.103	972
Log Likelihood:	-432.810	-378.076
Akaike Inf. Crit.	935.621	766.15

Note:

p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Coefficients are odds ratios

Confidence intervals in ()

The table presented above shows the regression results both for the bivariate logistic regression (M1) and the multivariate logistic regression (M2).

The coefficient for the independent variable Gender Inequality suggests a positive association with Electoral Violence, with an odds ratio of 1.06. Odds ratios measure how the odds for the dependent variable to happen changes, for every one-unit increase in the independent variable. In this analysis, the odds ratio represents the likelihood of electoral violence occurring, compared to the likelihood of it not occurring. One could thus interpret the estimate of 1.06 as for every one-unit increase in gender inequality index, the odds of electoral violence increase by 6%.

Further, the p-value shows the relationship to have strong statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). The p-value represents the probability of observing the specific coefficient by chance, under the assumption that there is no actual relationship in the unobserved population (Kellstedt, Whitten, 2018: 163). The commonly used threshold in this field of research is 0.05. That is, with a p-value below 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected (Ibid: 166). This is further supported by the confidence interval 1.05-1.07. Confidence interval represents the range of likely values for the true odds ratio in the unobserved population, at a 95% confidence level (Kellstedt, Whitten, 2018: 201). In the context of odds ratio, a confidence interval not including 1 indicates a statistically significant result, as an odds ratio of 1 represents no association between the independent and dependent variable (Kellstedt, Whitten, 2018: 267). Thus, in this analysis, the confidence interval indicates that the true odds ratio, i.e. the true effect of gender inequality on electoral violence in the unobserved population, is likely between 1.05-1.07 at a 95% confidence level.

As for the results presented in Model 2, showing the results of the multivariate regression analysis, the statistically significant positive association between gender inequality and electoral violence holds. Further, the p-value remains very low, indicating a strong statistical significance of the observed relationship. The confidence interval supports this notion. Yet, there is a slight decrease in the odds ratio from 1.06 to 1.046, suggesting the odds for electoral violence to increase by 4.6% for every one-unit increase in the gender inequality index when controlling for additional factors.

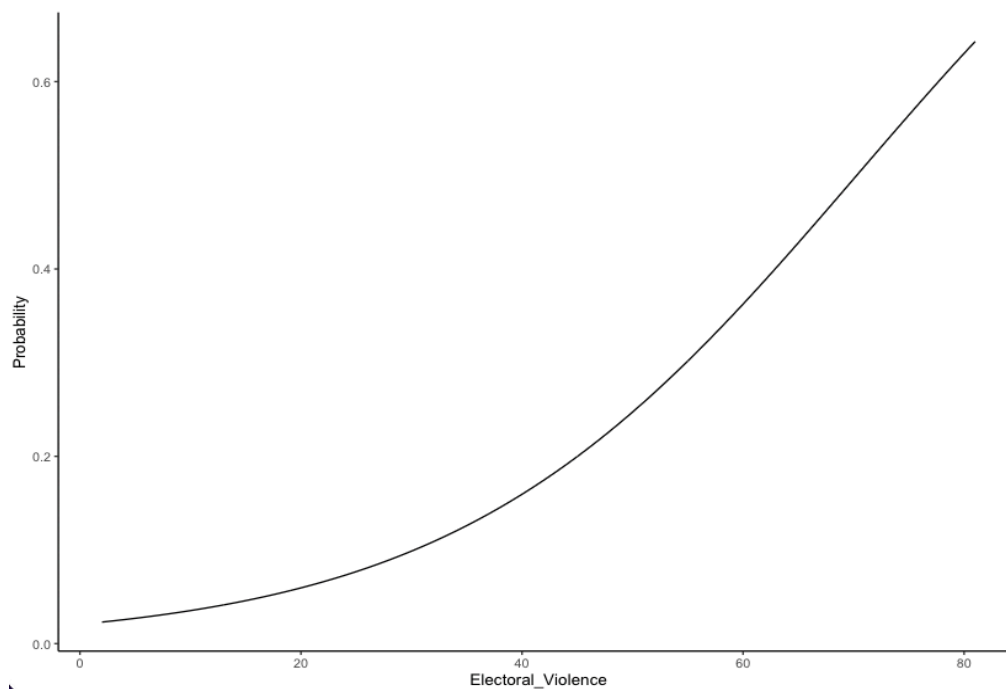
Moving on to the control variables, intrastate conflict shows a statistically significant and strongly positive correlation with electoral violence, with an odds ratio at 4.655. The odds ratio for ethnic fractionalization suggests a negative correlation with electoral violence. Yet, the effect size is small, and the p-value and confidence interval shows an insignificant result. Thus, it cannot be concluded that ethnic fractionalization has a real effect on electoral violence in this model. The last control variable, Liberal Democracy, shows significant results. However, similarly to ethnic fractionalization, the effect size is small, with an odds ratio of 0.990, suggesting a slight negative correlation between liberal democracy and electoral violence.

The AIC (Akaike Information Criteria) is used to compare the statistical fit of different models, where a lower AIC value suggests a better model fit (Akaike, 1974). When looking at the AIC for M1 and M2, there is a substantial difference. M2 has a much lower AIC compared to M1, indicating that the multivariate regression is a considerably better fit for the data. Thus, one can draw the conclusion that the addition of control variables improves the explanatory power of the regression analysis.

4.3 Graph illustration of bivariate relationship

Below, a curve plot shows an illustration of the bivariate relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence. In line with the results in Table 5, it shows a clear positive correlation between gender inequality and electoral violence. That is, as gender inequality increases, so does the likelihood of electoral violence.

Figure 9: Curve plot of the bivariate relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence



4.4 Robustness checks

Considering the global scope of the study, a robustness check was conducted by splitting the data of electoral violence into four geographical regional subsets and then performing regressions for each region. This serves two main purposes. First, it checks for regional variations. In the global analysis, it is assumed that the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence is consistent across all contexts. However, regional differences do exist, including political, social, and cultural dynamics which could influence the relationship. Thus, a check for these regional differences can test whether the observed effect is robust or context-specific. Additionally, the robustness check also allows validity-testing through investigating the consistency of the findings. If the effect is consistent across regions, it strengthens the validity of the global model (Brancati, 2018: 221).

As already mentioned, the data was split into four subsets based on geographical region. Regions with a small number of cases were merged with neighbouring or similar regions to ensure that the regression could produce meaningful results. For example, Canada, which is the only country from North America included in the analysis, was merged with Europe. Thus, the four different regional subsets are the following: South America, Europe/ North America, Africa, Asia/Oceania. South America was examined in Model 3 (M3), Europe/North America was examined in Model 4 (M4), Africa was examined in Model 5 (M5), and Asia/Oceania was examined in Model 6 (M6).

All models represent multivariate regressions, with the same control variables included as in the global model (M2). Below, the table containing all models will be presented, including the global model (M2). That is, the table includes five models, M2-M6.

It should be acknowledged that while most regions remained a fairly similar distribution of positive values of electoral violence compared to the global dataset, Europe/North America constitutes an exception. Only 14 of the 291 observations showed occurrence of electoral violence. As this only constitutes approximately 5% of the total number of cases, this imbalance could make Model 4 less effective for assessing an effect between gender inequality and electoral violence.

Table 6

	<i>Dependent Variable</i>				
	Electoral Violence				
	Global	South America	Europe/ North America	Africa	Asia/Oceania
	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Constant	0.036*** (0.015, 0.080)	0.067 (0.002, 01.314)	0.206 (0.008, 3.900)	0.703 (0.092, 5.227)	0.004*** (0.001, 0.18)
Gender Inequality	1.046*** (1.031, 1.061)	1.061* (1.009, 1.122)	1.001 (0.933, 1.068)	0.993 (0.959, 1.027)	1.073*** (1.046, 1.104)
Intrastate Conflict	4.655*** (3.184, 6.837)	5.309** (1.710, 17.652)	32.850*** (5.698, 254.589)	4.898*** (2.661, 9.200)	2.357* (1.139, 4.914)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.996 (0.988, 1.00)	0.989 (0.964, 1.014)	1.036 (0.975, 1.109)	0.997 (0.983, 1.010)	1.006 (0.988, 1.02)
Liberal Democracy	0.990* (0.981, 0.999)	0.970* (0.945, 0.994)	0.946*** (0.921, 0.969)	0.993 (0.975, 1.011)	1.011 (0.993, 1.030)
Observations:	972	168	291	245	262
Log Likelihood:	-378.076	-68.890	-31.966	-68.890	-100.462
Akaike Inf. Crit.	766.15	147.78	73.933	147.78	210.92

Note:

p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Coefficients are odds ratios

Confidence intervals in ()

Interpreting the results for the independent variable, Gender Inequality, the effect remains significant for two out of the four regional models. In both M3 (South America) and M6 (Asia/Oceania) the effect of gender inequality on electoral violence is statistically significant, and the effect is stronger than in the global model, with an odds ratio of 1.061 in M3 and 1.073 in M6. This is interpreted as a one-unit increase in gender inequality to be associated with a 6% increase of electoral violence for South America and 7% for Asia/Oceania. However, in Africa and Europe/North America models, the effect is insignificant. As already mentioned, the class imbalance due to lack of positive values of electoral violence in the Europe/North America model makes it less reliable. However, the insignificant results for gender inequality in Africa suggests other factors to be main drivers of electoral violence in this region.

Looking at the control variables, intrastate conflict produces the most robust results throughout all models, and is the only variable that shows significant results in all models. In M5 (Africa) intrastate violence seems to be an especially strong predictor of electoral violence. With an odds ratio of 4.898, this suggests that presence of intrastate conflict increases the odds of electoral violence by almost 390%.

Ethnic fractionalization does not show statistical significance in any of the models, which is in line with the results of the global model. Thus, according to these models, ethnic diversity does not seem to in itself increase the risk of electoral violence.

The effect of liberal democracy differs in the regional models. In South America (M3), liberal democracy has a significant negative relationship with electoral violence, with an odds ratio of 0.970. This suggests that a one unit increase in liberal democracy reduces the odds of electoral violence by approximately 3%. Liberal democracy seems to have a similar effect in the Europe/North America model (M4). However, as previously noted, this model has limitations due to class imbalance which makes the results less reliable. In contrast, liberal democracy does not seem to have a significant effect in Africa or Asia/Oceania.

Further, with the AIC we can compare model fit across the regions. The South America (M3) and Africa (M5) models show the exact same values of AIC (147.78), which suggests that the models have the same explanatory power. The Asia/Oceania model (M6) has a considerably higher AIC (210.92) which demonstrates a poorer model fit. The Europe/North America

model (M4) has the lowest AIC (73.933). However, this should be interpreted with caution due to the extreme class imbalance.

4.5. Analysis

Looking at the results of the regression analysis, this study provides empirical support for the hypothesis that high levels of gender inequality are positively correlated with an increased probability of electoral violence. The results of the bivariate regression (M1) shows a statistically significant effect of gender inequality on the occurrence of electoral violence, with an odds ratio of 1.06. When control variables are included in the multivariate regression (M2), the odds ratio for gender inequality slightly decreases to 1.046, yet remains statistically significant. This indicates that even when controlling for relevant factors, gender inequality remains a significant predictor of electoral violence. The robustness checks further support these findings, as the relationship remains significant in two out of the four regional models. Thus, the results align with the theoretical argument that gender norms and specifically militarized masculinities contribute to normalizing violence as a means to assert or maintain power, although such a causal mechanism cannot be investigated in this sort of study.

However, the varying results in the regional models shows that while gender inequality does seem to have a significant effect on electoral violence, its impact may be dependent on contextual factors. While the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence remains significant in the regional models for South America and Asia/Oceania, it becomes insignificant in the Europe/North America and Africa models. While imbalance in the dataset for the Europe/North America model makes the results for this model less reliable, one needs to look further into the results of the Africa model.

Looking at the results for Africa, they indicate that intrastate violence has a much stronger effect on electoral violence than gender inequality. This suggests that broader conflict dynamics may overshadow the influence of gender inequality in this region. These results are however surprising given that much of the previous research on this subject has focused on African contexts, and found significant effects of gender inequality on electoral violence ((Ouedraogo, Ouedraogo, 2019; Norman, 2018; Tiedermann, 2024). Thus, one needs to look further into the reasons behind these results. Compared with previous research, differences in measurement and data sources could provide an explanation for the discrepancy. Ouedraogo and Ouedraogo (2019) used data from the Afrobarometer to measure gender inequality and

electoral violence. The afrobarometer collects public opinion data through conducting face-to-face interviews, and measures citizens's attitudes (Afrobarometer, 2024). This is a key difference, since Ouedraogo and Ouedraogo bases its findings on individual perceptions and attitudes while this study uses a global index which is a macro-level structural measure. Thus, Ouedraogo and Ouedraogo likely captured different aspects of gender inequality through their operationalization, which could explain the different results. However, this does not explain why this study arrives at different results from Norman (2018), who used similar macro-level measurements of electoral violence and gender inequality.

Another key finding concerns the role of the control variables. Beginning with intrastate conflict, this is the most consistent and strongest predictor of electoral violence throughout all models. This is in line with previous research and suggests that the immediate political and security context plays a crucial role for the risk of electoral violence, although gender inequality seems to have a considerable effect even when this variable is controlled for. Moreover, the effect of liberal democracy varies across regions. Ethnic fractionalization does not show significant results in any of the models. This is contrary to prior research, which unanimously points to ethnic divisions as a key predictor of electoral violence. However, as already discussed in section 3.3.2, the operationalization of the variable in this study did not directly measure ethnic cleavages, but intended instead to use a measure of ethnic diversity as a proxy for ethnic tensions and cleavages. However, the results indicate that this operationalization did not manage to capture these structures. Thus, future research should refine the measurement of ethnic divisions to better capture ethnically motivated grievances or political exclusion.

4.6 Limitations and future research

Despite the strengths of this study, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the study relies on a macro-level quantitative approach. This was motivated by the lack of prior research on this topic and need for generalizable findings that could form a basis for future research. Thus, it only manages to investigate a correlational relationship. And although the theoretical framework provides a plausible causal mechanism, suggesting gender norms and more specifically militarized masculinities to affect the occurrence of electoral violence, this is not directly measured in this study. Thus, future research could benefit from taking on a micro-level approach to capture individual perceptions and attitudes

of gender norms and electoral violence. Further, although the global scope of the study provides important insights, the robustness checks clearly shows that the relationship between electoral violence and gender inequality is context dependent. Thus, the large scope could be seen as a limitation since it fails to incorporate relevant context-specific factors.

5. Summary & Conclusions

This thesis has examined the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence, addressing a significant gap in existing literature. It has explored the relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence through a global, quantitative analysis. At the core of this research was the research question: “How does the level of gender inequality affect the probability of electoral violence?” The hypothesis tested was:

H1: High levels of gender inequality is positively correlated with a high probability of electoral violence.

While previous research has demonstrated connections between gender inequality and both intrastate and interstate violence, this study has contributed to the field of research by investigating gender inequality’s effect on electoral violence, finding evidence for a positive correlation. These results reveal that societies with higher levels of gender inequality pose increased probability of electoral violence, even when other factors such as intrastate conflict, ethnic fractionalization, and level of democracy are controlled for.

The scope of the study was global, and revealed a significant positive relationship between gender inequality and electoral violence. However, the robustness checks highlighted regional variations, suggesting a context-dependent nature of the relationship. These results provide new insights and advance our theoretical understanding of electoral violence by incorporating gender dimensions that have previously been overlooked. While this study cannot establish causality, it provides a strong empirical foundation for future research exploring the mechanisms through which gender norms and disparities influence electoral processes and violence.

In this way, the study contributes to the field by producing generalizable results that highlight the link between gender inequality and electoral violence on a global scale. These findings

should serve as a foundation for future research aimed at uncovering the causal mechanisms that drive this relationship. By further examining how gender inequality shapes political dynamics and effect electoral violence, scholars can deepen our understanding of the underlying processes and inform policy interventions that promote more inclusive and stable democratic societies.

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